



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



### Connecticut General Assembly Children's Committee Testimony of Commissioner Charlene Russell-Tucker March 8, 2022

Good morning Representative Linehan, Senator Anwar, Senator Kelly, Representative Dauphinais, and members of the Children's Committee. I am Charlene Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of the Department of Education (Department). I am sorry that I am unable to join you virtually today, but I would like to offer you the following written testimony.

#### **H.B. No. 5352, An Act Prohibiting the Withholding of Recess as a Form of Student Discipline**

Given the importance of physical activity for all students, the Department is supportive of this proposal. We believe it is intended to address only those situations in which a teacher or administrator disciplines a student by denying that student recess, however the way it is drafted, one could interpret the language as preventing a suspended student from being denied access to recess or physical education. While we believe this interpretation is not likely, it would be clearer to include at the end of the new language in line 28 "as a form of discipline except such discipline as imposed pursuant to Sections 10-233b, 10-233c or 10-233d."

Additionally, this language would seem to preclude a school employee from removing a student from recess or physical education class if the student's behavior warrants removal (i.e., to preserve health and safety) based on behavior during recess or physical education class. We would suggest further clarifying this language.

Thank you for taking this into consideration as you move this proposal forward.